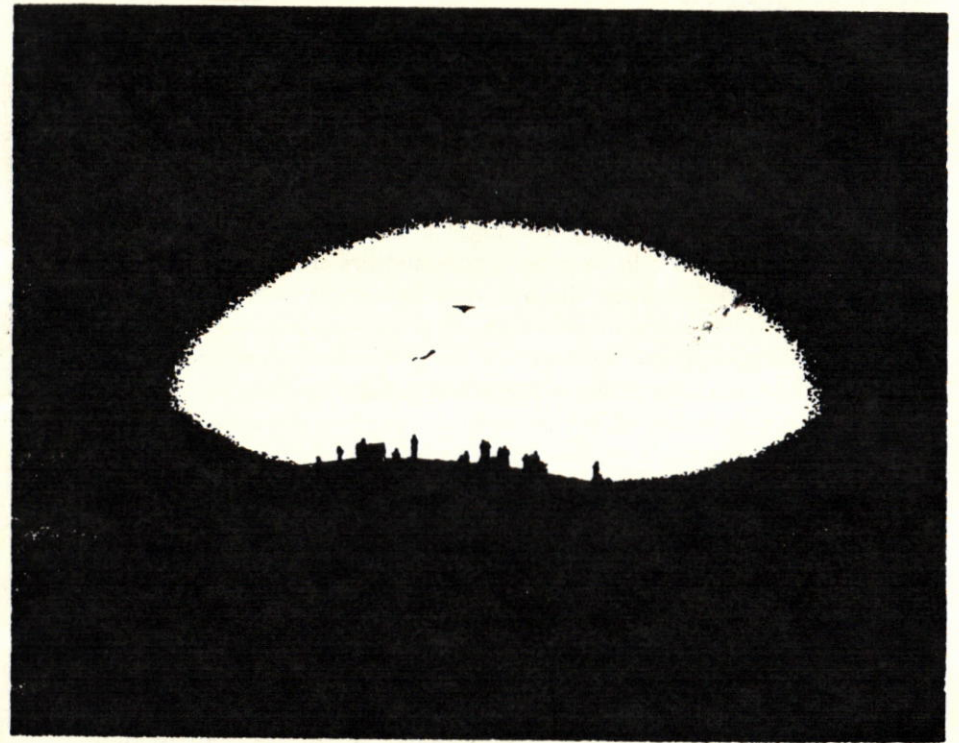




## BLACK STAR NORTH #1



*A New Dawn Looms Over The Horizon*



## THE TRAVELLER

The contemporary traveler is not the traveler of the azure fields of Rimbaud, who ran in the frenzied splashing of the tides, with a mind less obedient than a child's; neither is he the sailor of Baudelaire, the curious explorer who faces Eldorado, the gift that Fate had promised him. He does not resemble the decisive wanderer, the nomad of Isabelle Eberhardt who is everywhere at home, alone, poor in needs, away from family, property and a permanent job.

The modern traveler is the alienated temporary computer user in the 'neutral zone' of the techno-cities, in which the corpse of counter-culture's trip is exposed in the windows of its shopping centers. He is the farmer of Chiapas, dragged from the land he thought was his, only to be sent to the shanty-towns of Mexico City and to the industrial zones, flexible in regard to impoverishment. He is the homeless person of the metropolis who wanders day and night under the shadow and the vast size of the skyscrapers, in wagons of commodities and in institutions. He is the 'guaranteed' worker, the one who has so far won the position of fastest rabbit in the game of carrot and stick and who now sees his plunder gradually disappear into the horizon. He is the immigrant, figure-symbol of the mobile work force, the extreme form of the modern traveler, which the force of capital has blown miles from the place she once regarded as 'home'. He is the black worker whose brutal submission can no longer be disguised behind the illusion of being 'alternative'. He is the mobile worker. He is all of us, whose common assets are being colonized: the air we breathe, the space in which we live, the language we speak, our own bodies. We are forced to struggle everyday for survival in order to forget life itself.

The fiery words of blood that inscribe the history of the unmasking of the unfree in the times of fencing in, have never shined more than they do today. The fragmentations that Marx described are completed today. We are fenced in and divided. Capital sought to tear our community into pieces by stepping on our mistakes, on the alienated product of our struggle. We become homeless and involuntary travelers, wanderers in an alien world that presents nothing new to us. Will we ever enjoy another drunken sleep on the beach now that the only drunkenness to which the wanderer is allowed to give himself is the intoxication of the commodity?

Our class must become the negation of negation. The pieces of the proletariat must be welded together. Nothing is permanently lost and the rage is already boiling. The meeting of the permanently temporary and temporarily permanent workers is near. And with it the dawn of the of the expropriation of the expropriators. We have no illusions. The horizon is blurred. Yet we cannot overlook the fact that we can already trace the objective—at least-terms for another International. The last one.

April 1995  
(translated from the Greek magazine: TPTG)

## WEBSITES

[www.infoshop.org](http://www.infoshop.org)  
gateway to anarchy on the web

[www.ainfos.ca](http://www.ainfos.ca)

anarchist news from around the world

[www.westpapua.net](http://www.westpapua.net)  
website for the free West Papua

movement

## NEW ENGLAND RESOURCES

Lucy Parsons Center  
549 Columbus  
Boston, MA 02118  
(617) 267-6272

anarchist bookstore and resource  
center

Institute for Social Ecology  
1118 Maple Hill Road  
Plainfield, VT 05667  
(802) 454-8493  
<http://ise.rootmedia.org>

classes and workshops in sustainable  
design, permaculture and organic  
agriculture techniques, and radical  
history and theory.

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Easthampton, MA 01027  
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Radical gardening project works with  
urban community organizers to  
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welcome!

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Provides free vegetarian food  
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every Sunday afternoon from  
about 1-3 pm in Monument  
Square, downtown Portland  
Maine.



## WE DISTRIBUTE:

\$3- "The LA Rebellion:  
Context of a Proletarian  
Uprising", Aufheben Group.  
Reprinted in pamphlet form  
by Black Star North.

\$5- "Living In A Dying  
World" by S.V. Cassette of  
plissed-off and emotional  
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Portland anarchist. All  
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c/o Mutual Aid Portland  
PO Box 7328  
Portland, ME 04112





Venomous Butterfly Publications  
Killing King Abacus  
Willful Disobedience  
41 Sutter Street  
PMB 1661  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
[www.geocities.com/kk\\_abacus](http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus)

Killing King Abacus is an excellent insurrectionary anarchist journal with a penetrating and totalizing analysis. Also has information/news related to direct action. Willful Disobedience contains some of the most biting, lucid, and critical essays in the US anarchist subculture. Each issue also contains news about/analysis of global action.

Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed  
c/o CAL Press  
PO Box 1446  
Columbia, MO 65205-1446

Contains great analysis and a lively letters section. Also an alternative publishing company.

Alternative Press Review  
c/o AAL Press  
PO BOX 4710  
Arlington, VA 22204-4710

Every issue contains reprints of articles from alternative press/small press publications. We encourage you to check this out if only for the editorial column.

Green Anarchy  
Black Clad Messenger  
PO Box 11331  
Eugene, OR 97440

A-News  
PO Box 30557  
Athens 10033  
Greece

A newsletter chronicling resistance in Greece.

Resistance  
Journal of the Earth Liberation Front  
Press Office  
PO Box 4783  
PDX, OR 97208

The Northeastern Anarchist  
Magazine of the Northeastern  
Federation of Anarcho-Communists  
PO Box 230685  
Boston, MA 02123

Local magazine with good coverage of international news.

Live Wild or Die!  
PO Box 50044  
Minneapolis, MN 55458

Eco-anarchist zine with a focus on direct action.

Antagonism Press  
c/o BM Makhno  
London WC1N 3XX  
[www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/y/3909](http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/y/3909)

Published "Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement" by Gilles Dauve' and Francois Martin. They also have an informative web-site with links to other little known Anti-State, Communist-Anarchist groups/publications.

Midnight Notes  
PO Box 204  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
[www.midnightnotes.com](http://www.midnightnotes.com)

Publish a journal with an Autonomist perspective.

Clamor  
PO Box 1225  
Bowling Green, OH 43402

## BLACK STAR NORTH #1, Spring 2001

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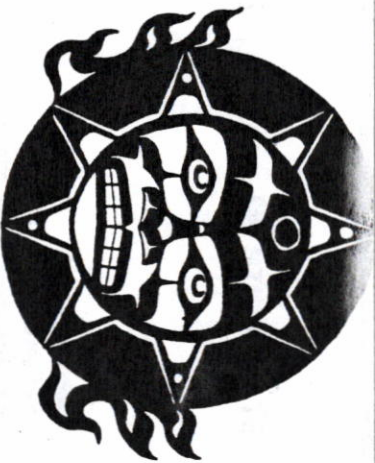
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Cover photo and photo on page 43 by Robaire Ohaire.  
All writing by BSN Collective unless otherwise noted.

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## A NEW DAWN LOOMS OVER THE HORIZON

Welcome to the first issue of *Black Star North*. Our primary motivation in creating this zine stems from what we perceive to be a need for practical theory among today's North American anarchist movement. It appears as if among this current there is a tendency to act without thinking critically. This behavior creates situations where anarchists blindly engage in ineffective and often reformist campaigns. This perhaps stems from an ahistorical and untheoretical understanding of modern capitalism and industrial civilization. Conversely, others tend to expound on so-called radical theory while seldom putting their ideas into practice. Furthermore, what does constitute Anarchist theory often times consists of antiquated and unupdated theory from the turn of the last century (found in such publications as *Northeastern Anarchist* and *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review*) or theories such as Social Ecology which lacks both a class analysis and a connection to concrete struggle.

We are also confused and quite concerned about what some are calling a growing radical "movement" in the U.S. While we are excited about the increasing number of large and militant protests such as those which occurred recently in Seattle, DC, Philadelphia, and L.A. we are worried about what seems to be the lack of an actual social base for this supposed "movement." It appears as if many Anarchists in the U.S. are unwilling to confront this fact. Those who do acknowledge this often express the need for "community outreach," which usually consists of an elitist belief that they possess a revolutionary

## CONTACTS

Every revolutionary project is an educational one  
-Murray Bookchin

### PRISONER SUPPORT / LEGAL AID

Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid  
Network  
818 SW 3<sup>rd</sup> AVE  
PMB #354  
Portland, OR 97204

Anarchist Black Cross- Philadelphia  
4722 Baltimore Ave  
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Mutual Aid Legal Fund  
PO Box 95616  
Seattle, WA 98145-2616

### DISTROS

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Clearwater, FL 33762

DIY ("do-it-yourself," ) distro with an impressive selection of interesting and obscure titles on various subjects.

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PO Box 40682  
San Francisco, CA 94140  
[www.akpress.org](http://www.akpress.org)

HUGE selection of books, pamphlets, and music pertaining to various relevant issues.

### ZINES / JOURNALS

Do or Die  
c/o Prior House  
6 Tilbury Place  
Brighton, East Sussex BN2 2GY, UK  
[www.ecoaction.org](http://www.ecoaction.org)

Aufheben Journal  
c/o Brighton Unemployed Workers

Centre  
4 Crestway Parade  
The Crestway  
Hollingdean  
Brighton BN1 7BL, UK

<http://lists.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/aut.html#auf1edit.htm>

Insightful and often times accurate assessment of capitalism, its resistance, and their own involvement in such struggles. From an Anti-State Communist Marxist perspective with an incredible commitment to theoretical rigor.

Undercurrent  
c/o Brighton Unemployed Workers  
Centre

4 Crestway Parade  
The Crestway  
Hollingdean  
Brighton BN1 7BL, UK  
[www.snpc.co.uk/undercurrent/direct.html](http://www.snpc.co.uk/undercurrent/direct.html)

Anti-State Communism responsible for launching many of the debates (in the UK) surrounding the Anti-Globalization/Anti-Capitalist/Anarchist movement. Highly recommended for those involved in said respective movements. Check out the essay "Practice and Ideology in the Direct Action Movement" available at the web-site listed above or write to us for a copy.

Claustrophobia  
PO Box 1721  
Baltimore, MD 21203  
[www.charm.net/~clastro](http://www.charm.net/~clastro)

A newspaper with a great class analysis often sorely lacking in the Anarchist "scene." Highly recommended.



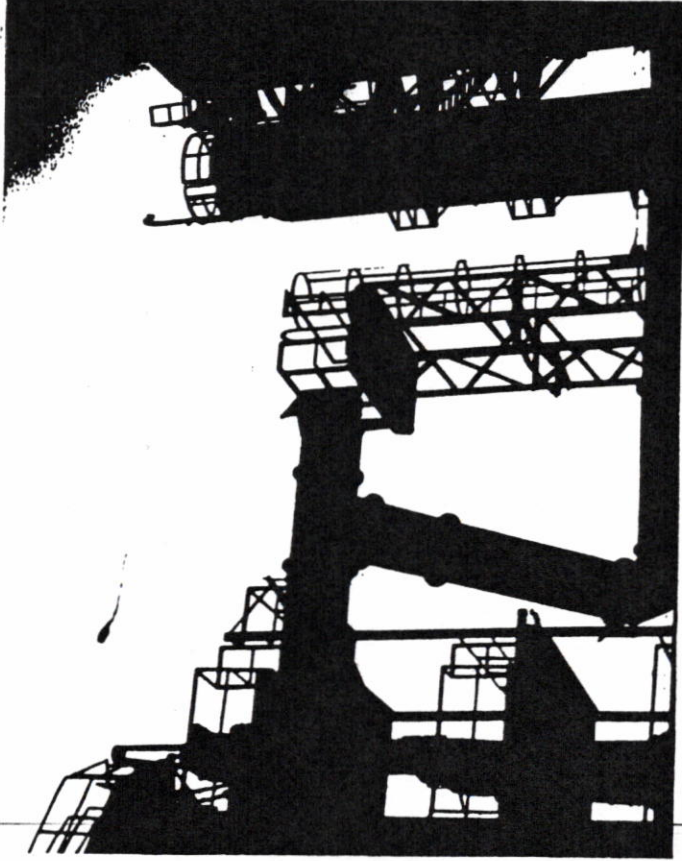
"truth" with which to save the poor and ignorant masses. Such an attitude is perpetuated by the institution of specialized roles—in this case, a specialist in social change. In other words, the "activist" stands above the community she is attempting to organize, rather than recognizing that her own liberation is intertwined with the liberation of others, and seeking to understand and act along side others in the struggle for social revolution.

This isn't, however, to say that there are not those engaging in projects that are both creative and conflictual to capital. Certainly instances exist. We hope to provide a concrete example of such a project by reprinting an article from *Love and Treason* entitled "Anti-Capitalist Actions Around Mass Transit In San Francisco 1993-1995." We look forward to hearing about more of such projects, and will print similar stories in future issues. Particularly, we are interested in publicizing examples of the numerous inspiring on-going projects being carried out internationally.

We also hope to provide a forum for developing a coherent and relevant theory pertaining to the creation of a world free of capitalism, the state, ecological destruction, and deformed social relations. Hopefully this forum will be pertinent both experienced anarchists and those who are new to anti-authoritarian theory and practice. We eagerly await your correspondence.

Although the anarchist movement in the U.S. has yet to become a realistic threat to the reigning regime, an increase in critical inquiry and action, coupled by growing resistance around the world gives us hope that such a threat remains a true possibility. With vigorous critique and creatively defiant action, the possibility of a new dawn looms over the horizon.

Black Star North Collective, March 2001



#### Living In A Dying World...

There are an increasing number of people in this world, especially living in areas of urban sprawl, who have never experienced beauty. They have never felt love. Never made love. Never been in love. Never been loved. Never felt the loving warmth of another person's body next to their own. Never danced with friends around a campfire. Never sat on a hillside with a loved one and watched the sun go down. Never tasted a real garden-fresh, home-cooked meal, let alone felt the joy of sharing one with friends or family. This is tragic. But this is reality. For a growing number, this is what it's like to be living in a dying world.

These people see no hope. When these people look into the future, they see only a promise of pain and death. They are the forgotten ones-- Frankenstein's monsters. They see no alternative to their misery aside from their own demise. Their only joy arises from destruction-- the complete and total destruction of the world that surrounds them.

My hope is that the increasingly downcast masses will somehow manage to find hope. Not a false sense of hope offered by some religion or dogma, but a real sense that there is a desirable and viable alternative to the current order. I pray that it is not too late. I pray there is enough intact ecosystem left to sustain us. I pray that humanity has not been depraved and severed from nature beyond the point of repair. I hope and strive for revolution. This hope keeps me alive...





## CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE: Anarchy Without Ideology

Socially defined roles, infused in us through the proliferation of market based values, become so much a part of one's being that it becomes difficult to examine with an open mind socially created ideology. Thus, the individual (at least in the US—where a largely unthinking, uncritical, anti-intellectual culture exists) when presented with a challenge to her code of belief immediately mistakes critique as a personal attack against herself.

The most prevalent ideology existing in contemporary American society is one of cynical post-modernism (a term originally coined by French academics). This belief is one suggesting that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, capitalism has triumphed, thus bringing us to the end of history. Everything has been done before: the potential for new and previously unexplored ideas and creative actions seems non-existent. Internalizing a sense of utter hopelessness, most Americans find escape through such banal activities as television, shopping, impassionate sex, and drug abuse. Others, perhaps sensing the hollowness of these endeavors seek retreat in such ideological constructs as New Age Mysticism, Socialist Parties, Christian Fundamentalism, and uncritical Anarchism. Whether a cynical post-modernist, or a self-avowed harbinger of truth and enlightenment, however, all remain chained to the rigid confines of their dogma.



As the penetration of the capitalist marketplace devours the deepest pockets of social life, one is often left with relationships that reduce individuals to objects. In this sense it's often easier and less heartbreaking to interact through the mediation of the computer. Many daily communicate through chat-rooms where the individual can type what they want without facing the person they are impersonally interacting with. Thus those who utilize chat-rooms feel "free" to engage in the most foul-mouthed, humiliating and substance less "chats".

So it remains a project for us not to reduce our relations to a mirror of this societies empty economic spectacle. To refuse the restraints imposed upon us it becomes necessary to look closely at our relations.

We must recognize that we are all products of capitalism and its colonization of every relatively free space left. This translates into a colonization of our relationships. In order to resist this we need a conscious recognition of the economic system --and its militarily trained guard dog-- the state--responsible for such colonization. With such a realization it becomes necessary to further resist the post-modern approach of merely providing a band-aid to a wholly malignant system. One can never be whole or healed while living under the reign of capital and state. So approaches to becoming whole while under the present crisis are short-sighted in that its appeal is to change individuals within the dominant society rather than creating a total rupture with the socio-economic order.

Our visions of relationships and a new society should be outside that offered by capitalism. The Situationists had it right when they admonished us to "BE REALISTIC DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE." Similarly the Surrealists in their imaginative drawings and writings had a craving for taking the absurdities of everyday life and transforming them into something completely new. In our struggle for a new world we must subvert the present without letting the present taint our imagination of (im)possibilities. On this basis we can seek to create relationships as well as a new world far beyond the limits offered by capitalist economics.



In our scarred and deadened social landscape a vast communicative rift is exhibited. Our inability to speak, communicate, and interact on a level beyond that of mere small talk and idle chatter has permeated almost every informal (and formal of course) social grouping. Our roles as defined by the dominant social order, have so obscured meaningful conversation and interaction that many have come to accept it as such-- as well as accepting capitalism as a natural and inevitable outgrowth of history. So too have many given up on an attempt to engage in interactions beyond those defined by state and capital.

Thus on numerous occasions one encounters friends dishonestly lying or otherwise acting in a way that is disrespectful. I sometimes find myself doing just this-- lying with an intention to tell the truth at a later time. The best time is anytime but the immediacy of the moment. Time, a reigning pillar of capitalist logic, has thus penetrated the innermost recesses of our relationships.

The incessant worry experienced while trying to avoid these inhibitions is frequently met with an uneasiness easily observable by an at least semi-observant individual. A shaky hand, tense face, perpetual hand movement and undirected attention are often part of this tension of encounter.

Conversely, one can also observe the boorish outbursts of hate. In this sense promotion of debate/dialogue is suspended and replaced by a vindictive vulgarity masked as confrontation. The fundamental issue in question is dodged and an all out assault on ones character is initiated. This is not however to say disagreement should always remain within the realm of the debating the narrow issue in question, while avoiding argument based upon ones character; quite the contrary a balance is needed. I mention this because I sometimes find myself engaged in confrontations whereby I assault the others character while failing to perhaps try to understand where the other is coming from.



The ideological adherent has chosen to wholeheartedly embrace his given ideology. He has done so in hopes to compensate for his own sense of emptiness. Thus ideology acts as a substitute for meaning. A critical attack on the ideology is perceived as an attack on the individual, because that individual has dedicated such a large portion of his life to the embodiment of that ideology.

This phenomenon can be observed in the defensive response given by many anarchists when their dogma is thrown into question. For example, many anarchists today embrace lifestyle individualism where the perceived mode of change resides *exclusively* in the actions of the individual. Lacking is a broader social framework and class analysis. When one attempts to critique these tendencies one is often dismissed as being "academic," "boring," or "intellectual." Thus, the rigidity of their dogma keeps the ideology stuck in an ideological morass, preventing the development of an insurgent theory and practice.

If we are to create a social movement which is to become a true threat to the forces of domination, we must be willing to give and take criticism of ourselves and others. Furthermore, we mustn't allow the chains of ideology to prevent us from doing so. Saying this, the time has come to throw off such chains and create a world where we can truly realize our desires.

Solidarity is a Weapon!





# BEYOND "ANTI-GLOBALIZATION"

*Towards a Deeper Understanding of Capital and the State*

Capitalism has within its inherent logic always contained a motivation to ruthlessly expand. The Anti-Globalization movement is therefore false in asserting that the present phase of capitalism is somehow new. The way in which it is occurring may be new (states/countries have increased control over the populace, while the state itself has lost some control over capital and trade), but capital has always contained such a drive to expand its domain. Since its inception the logic guiding capital has been to "grow or die". This mentality and material manifestation has permeated throughout its history.

To relate it to my own region where I live in Portland, Maine, a local business by the name of Java Joe's owns in addition to two coffee shops a "local" Ben & Jerry's (which was recently bought out by a national corporation of which I'm not sure of the name); again demonstrating the always expansive drive of capitalism. This reveals that even on the scale of the local, capitalism possesses a drive to expand its domain and contain the competition. Put into perspective, this illustrates the nature of capitalism related to my own particular locale. In correspondence to the global context, the current manifestation of capital is a spatial reorganization eroding the sovereignty of nation-states.

Most Anti-Globalization activists as well as anarchists have unfortunately fallen into the trap of promoting the sovereignty of the nation-state over that of the globalization of capitalism. Both the nation-state and capitalism, however, need to be examined theoretically and subsequently attacked. Our analysis and actions



## ON RELATIONSHIPS, SOCIAL INTERACTION AND ECONOMICS

*Individuals getting private control over their lives, even something as vital as their own bodies is not a solution in itself. The only true solution is to create with others (of both sexes) relationships where one no longer fears nor risks domination... The goal is not for each person to declare his independence, but that each may stop fearfully refusing to be dependent interdependent.*

Gilles Dauve

In many circles outside that of my immediate network of comrades-- while very often in this context as well-- I find it difficult to interact in a way that accurately expresses my feelings and thoughts. This stems partly from my own insecurities as well as a fear of risk.

When I do find myself honestly expressive I'm often met with puzzled or perplexed looks. The experience of expressing an unpopular opinion can often lead to a blatant dodging of the subject/issue. While other times there is an acquiescence on the other party to your opinion so as to avoid conflict.



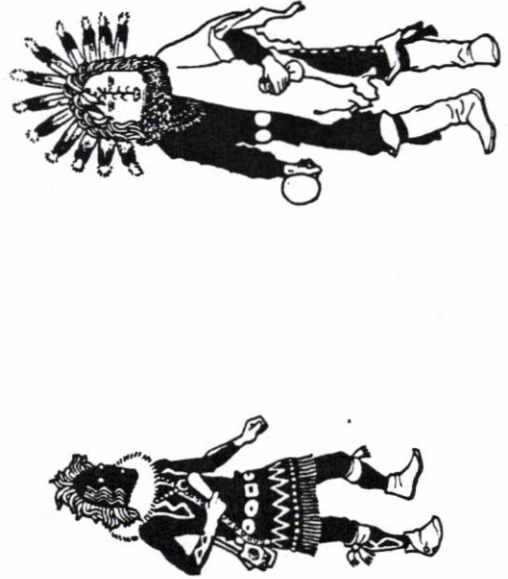


Petey and Matt are both caring and compassionate people. Indeed, their caring and compassion is exactly what has led the supposed authorities to seek their capture. Individuals who care about our world's dire present condition, and who have the courage to actively struggle for something better, are a threat to the dominant power structure. The brutal repression being forced upon Petey and Matt, and over 2 million other prisoners in the USA is a direct attempt by the state to silence and intimidate us all. Let us refuse their attempts to silence us! Let us work to free Petey and Matt, and let our anger and outrage at this rotten, repressive order motivate us onward to a day when no one will be imprisoned for being poor or trying to fight the institutions that create poverty, oppression, and the murder of the Earth.

## SUPPORT THE SANTA CRUZ 2!

*For updates on the status of the Santa Cruz 2, contact us at [blackstarnorth@yahoo.com](mailto:blackstarnorth@yahoo.com). Financial support it desperately needed for Matt and Peteys' upcoming legal battle. Make checks payable to:*

**Santa Cruz 2 Defense Fund  
PO Box 917  
Santa Cruz, CA 95006**



must also take into consideration the operation of capital on both a global and local scale. Such an understanding is needed so we don't end up becoming part of reformist or nationalist campaigns. We also need to recognize implicitly that when we attack a financial manifestation of capital such as the World Bank, IMF, or WTO we are doing simply that—attacking merely one aspect of the many headed capitalist beast.

The center of capital lies not merely in its exchange or financial sector, but also in its production center-- the point whereby most of us are forced to reproduce our own humiliation and enslavement. This being said, my point is not to fetishize the workplace as a superior sight of struggle, but to consciously recognize it as a potential breaking point for a world without capital, work, law, mass technics etc.\* Often times an understanding of the degradation caused by reducing ourselves to the demands of capitalism is lost to rebelling on behalf of the poor and dispossessed masses of the Third World. While oppressed people around the globe certainly deserve our solidarity, we often neglect a more theoretical and reflective understanding as to why we may decide to lob bricks through windows. In order to build a coherent and effective opposition to capital and the state, we must recognize the brutal state and capitalist restructuring forced upon the poor and dispossessed of the global south through institutions such as the WTO and IMF (and soon the FTAA if the rich get their way), as stemming from the same system that creates the internalized alienation we in the north feel every day at work, in school, and on the cold streets of our concrete cities and plastic suburbs. Capitalism's growth is also responsible for the increasing instances of gentrification and poverty in US cities and rural areas.

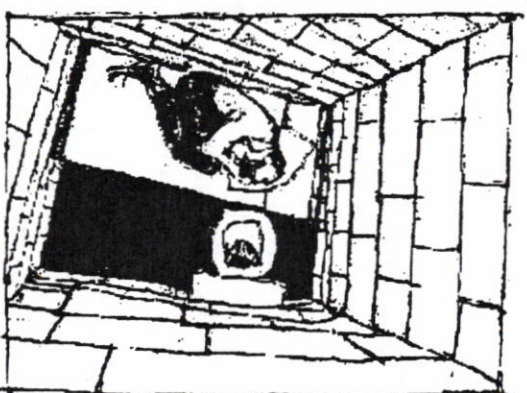


Among the Anti-Globalization movement there exists a theme of middle class pluralism-- justice, freedom, equality, fairness-- whereby the diversity of people existing on the planet are coalescing against "global capitalism." What is missing in this is an explicit reference to class. Thus we have middle class liberals fighting against "global capitalism," but ignoring the insidious nature of local capitalism, while at the same time failing to recognize class dynamics. This isn't however to say it's the fault of individuals as such, but more the fault of the non-profits and liberal organizations. The individuals involved in such organizations are often manipulated and not encouraged to think critically. Subsequently the relation of capitalism to our everyday lives is reduced to an evil, shadowy dominating "global capitalism" where the people of the Third World are forced to accept the dictates of such capitalist restructuring. While this is part of the puzzle, many pieces remain missing. Capitalism is a social relation affecting everyday life in its "global" and "local" manifestations. While working, our living activity is reduced to dead time whereby we seek relief only to return home, watch TV, go to bed, and start the same process over again. Taking it out the context of wage labor, we experience the same existential void in the absence of community wrought by the competitive and machine-oriented nature of modern capitalism.



Saying this, the task should not merely consist of blindly embracing the "Anti-Globalization" declaration of solidarity against "Global Corporations" and "Global Capitalism," but should seek to deconstruct the mythology inherent in its deference to the local against the global. Anarchists, Autonomists, and Anti-capitalists existing as an oppositional current shouldn't reduce their own efforts against such to a mere "Anti-Globalization" or even "Anti-Capitalism," without a conscious recognition of class and its relational dynamic to the capitalist totality. As demonstrated, capitalism is not a mere thing out there in the Third World, but a

On an evening in late January, Peter Schnell and his friend Matt "Urth" Whyte were arrested by police outside Santa Cruz, California. The details surrounding their case remain vague, but they are being charged with possession of "destructive devices" consisting supposedly of gasoline, milk jugs, and birthday candles. Petey and Matt are pleading not guilty to these charges, which could land them a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison each. Whether they are "innocent" or "guilty" in the eyes of an oppressive and illegitimate state, however, is irrelevant in as far as I'm concerned. Because they are freedom-fighters and because they are our comrades and brothers, they deserve our love and support.



As of this writing (3/24/01), Matt has been released on \$50,000 bond after being held in jail for three weeks without bond. In order to raise the money, his parents where forced to put their house up as collateral. Petey, however, remains in jail on \$100,000 bond. Word from comrades in California is that he should be bailed out soon, but the situation remains uncertain.

My heart sank when I heard the news of Petey and Matt's arrest. I feel horrible when any freedom loving person is taken prisoner, but Petey is the first person whom I've known personally to be captured by the state for blatantly political reasons.





In the Jefferson Hospital Cafeteria, Petey and I shared a salad, a raspberry smoothie, and a great conversation. We recalled our past involvement with various chapters of the Animal Defense League (a militant grassroots animal rights organization) and related our similar feelings of having become disenfranchised with various aspects of the group and the animal rights movement in general. I explained how I had become turned off by the elitism and classism of many animal rights activists, as well as by the reformist nature of fighting single issues without a coherent analysis of how those various issues fit within the larger framework of capitalism. Petey expressed similar sentiments, and related the story of how he was kicked out of his apartment in Boston by a roommate who didn't approve of his experimentation with dumpster-diving. I empathized deeply with Petey's frustrations with the limitations of the animal rights movement and the alienation he felt in trying to explain his feelings to other animal rights activists who didn't understand where he was coming from. The conversation continued for a couple hours as we finished our lunch and strolled through Center City, discussing radical politics and sharing our dreams of living in a world free from oppressive wage-slavery and industrial filth. Later that afternoon, after engaging in a passionate and incredibly stimulating dialogue, Petey and I gave each other a hug goodbye. I wished him the best of luck in California, and promised myself that I would get in touch with him again once he got settled on the West Coast. I never would have known at that time, however, that my next correspondence with Petey would be through a letter to his jail cell.



social relation conditioning the totality of our relations and everyday life. Our critical solidarity to rebels in the Third World should extend from perhaps an understanding of our mutual enslavement to capital and the state. While more physically alienating in the Third World, our relationship to capital in the First World tends to be more psychologically alienating (the service economy, for example). This understanding should form the reference point for solidarity, rather than consist merely a call for amorphous rebellion on behalf of Third World rebels.

To this end, we must develop a deeper understanding of capitalism. This must stem from a self critical and collective inquiry. Only then can we develop an insurrection consonant with the world we have a desire to live in.

\*For more information on this topic check out Midnight Oil: Work, Energy, War 1973 - 1992 by Midnight Notes Collective, Autonomedia or their website at [www.midnightnotes.org](http://www.midnightnotes.org).



## AN ANARCHIST STATEMENT AGAINST THE FTAA (and capitalism in general)

On April 20th, heads-of-state from every country in South and North America and the Caribbean (except Cuba), along with delegates from many of the worlds wealthiest corporations, will meet in Quebec City, Canada in an attempt to finish negotiations regarding a trade pact called the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Accompanying them will be over 5,000 riot police, secret service agents, undercover agents, private cops, and other armed personnel-- amounting to the largest police mobilization in Canadian history. Additionally, a ten-foot fence, topped with barbed wire, is being erected around the periphery of downtown



Quebec. Officials think this will aid the police in their attempt to enable the representatives of the wealthy elite to carry out a successful meeting, undisturbed (or so they hope) by the tens of thousands of activists and concerned individuals who plan to go to Quebec to protest the hideous implications of the FTAA. The corporate media will be there too, of course, to distort the views and opinions of the activists (especially anarchists) as well as the truth on how the FTAA's policies will affect the majority of the Western Hemisphere's population-- while presenting the public with the lies told to them by their powerful corporate bosses.

The FTAA is the latest attempt by the rich and powerful to extend capitalist relations to literally every corner of the globe. Like other trade agreements (World Trade Organization, European Union, etc.) the FTAA, with its emphasis on unrestrained economic growth, will lead to an increase in poverty, militarization, and ecological destruction. The objective of the FTAA is to extend an existing treaty, called the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA- which has already led to an increase in poverty, militarization, and ecological destruction in North America, particularly Mexico), to all countries in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba. Doing so will open all included borders to economic liberalization-- forcing the nation-states involved to forego environmental protection and labor laws that may be viewed by the corporate elite as barriers to such "free trade." International borders will not, of course, be open to the flood of Latin American immigrants who will eventually head north to escape the utter poverty that the FTAA, if enacted, will inevitably create in southern countries.



We oppose the FTAA and all so-called "free trade" agreements because they are an extension of capitalism-- an economic system based on ruthless competition, which creates hierarchical social relationships of rich/poor, exploiter/exploited, and have/have-nots. It is a system so entrenched in our daily lives and interpersonal relationships that we cannot escape it without demolishing it completely. Most of us experience it's cruel reality every day at work-- where we are forced to slave away, under degrading and humiliating conditions, just so that we may be able to afford the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter needed to keep us and our families alive. Others of us experience it at school, where we can only hope to enjoy a few moments of youthful bliss before succumbing to a similar fate of utter boredom

## The Last Time I Saw Petey...

Last November, before moving to Maine, I was living in Philadelphia and working part-time at a local health food store. One day while I was working there the store's freezer broke down, and since it had defrosted and could no longer be sold, the store employees were given permission to bring home as much frozen food as we cared to take. So that afternoon, after punching out my time card, I filled up my back-pack and two large grocery bags with as many vegetarian TV dinners as I could carry. My plan was to bring them to Wooden Shoe Books (a local volunteer-run anarchist bookstore) as an offering to the free bin. As I was walking up 4<sup>th</sup> Street, arms filled with about 30 pounds of assorted prepackaged vegetarian entrees and desserts, I ran into an old comrade who I hadn't seen in some time.

Petey Schnell wasn't someone who I had ever known intimately, but we remembered one another from our past involvement in animal rights activism, with which we had both been active organizers in different East Coast cities. We greeted one another with enthusiastic smiles, and I offered him some TV dinners, at which point we began sorting through the boxes on the sidewalk and reading the ingredient labels to find the vegan ones for him to bring back to his friends at the house where he was staying. Petey had come to Philly to visit some friends before departing the East Coast for California. Having been sick of the Northeast, Petey had decided to move to the West Coast, so as to enjoy a fresh start on his life and his activism with a change of scenery and social life. Since he had a few hours to spare before he had to meet up with his friend, I invited him to join me for lunch. So after carrying the food to Wooden Shoe Books, Petey and I headed for Jefferson Hospital on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, where I had a five-dollar coupon for the cafeteria that my housemate had given me (he had received it as part of his compensation for participating in a drug-study there).





personal glimpse of eternal poverty repaying over \$100,000 in student loans! This travesty goes on and on.... this Tourist class of Americans has invented velvet paintings, boy-bands, and Stephan King. It has destroyed our environment. It has put over 2 million people in jail. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people in the US alone die every year due to smoking, medications and alcohol. David Hasselhof is on Broadway. 60% of all Americans, as defined by the JAMA questionnaire, are clinically depressed. Doesn't anyone get it yet that you just cannot buy Spirituality?? Yes, we get cars to please our neighbors, go to coffee houses in imitation of beatniks and grow dreadlocks hoping that somehow Coolness becomes Awareness. Nope! Think of the other ideas and places ruined by this BoBo\* mentality: San Francisco, film, literature, the Counterculture, jazz, rock and roll, Lower Manhattan, Seattle and on and on. And of course: ART. This whole letter is a plea for values, especially in the Art world. Your article did reflect, pretty accurately, what is happening everywhere: it's all about makin' money!! The only thing that separates the galleries in Portland is the varying levels of greed mixed with pretension. My favorite places to show my photographs are at the Portland Coffee Roasters (on Commercial) and Local 188 (on State Street). On the other end of the spectrum is the Hay Gallery which contains more sterile wall hangings than K-Mart. And the artists interviewed for the article had a lot of tourist blood in them.... real profit motivations as opposed to being driven in the quest for Beauty! So, for obvious reasons, some will never get into a gallery at all unless they're in a Spending Mode.

The Solutions?? For America as a whole... it needs a radical transformation of some sort... and it won't look pretty!! The WPA in the 30's did some great stuff during the Depression (and they really had something to be depressed about!!). We need to look within. Beauty and simplicity CANNOT be purchased!! The individual artist in all of us is pretty easy to satisfy: express yourself, seek beauty, love yourself, protect the environment and celebrate LIFE. Take some chances: siege an alley with friends and have a One Day Show, put stuff on-line, rent a small storefront with other artists and call it whatever you want. Remember Edvard Munch left 80% of his paintings hanging in the forest, Van Gogh only sold 1 painting and Henri Rousseau was entirely self taught.

Being an artist means just how you live your life.

**-Robaire Ohaire, February 2001**

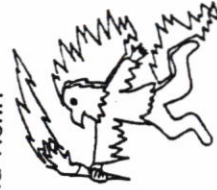
\*Bourgeois Bohemian

and meaninglessness. Still others are not even so lucky. Victims of poverty and often institutionalized racism, they languish in the concrete hell of America's growing prison system. Let us also not forget the others: the homeless, the illegal aliens, the forgotten seniors quietly withering away in nursing homes, and the hundreds of thousands internationally who die each year in wars for capitalist lust.



Inherent in the maddening logic of capitalism is a "grow or die" imperative that urges it to expand relentlessly-- constantly seeking new markets to exploit, ever cheaper sources of labor, and new ecosystems to destroy in its quest for more raw materials. We therefore reject the calls of "Anti-Globalization" liberals who denounce "global capitalism" and "corporate capitalism" as if a return to locally based capitalism would be any sort of a desirable or plausible alternative. We reject the insane, exploitative capitalist system as a whole, in both its global and local forms. We also reject reformist and nationalist calls for "green" politics and stronger state sovereignty. Support for such efforts will only continue the reign of capital or create new forms of tyranny and authority. The state, like capital, is an institutionalized form of violence and oppression that must be destroyed.

Capitalism, backed by government and the patriarchal, racist, ecocidal worldview of Western Civilization, is the root source of the vast misery currently inflicting the majority of the Earth's inhabitants. The gross expansion of capitalism into its present phase has created a situation in which the very future of life on Earth is under threat. The precious ecosystems of the Earth are being destroyed irreparably, and our very humanity is becoming lost to the artificial, computerized, genetically-engineered future of capitalist progress. Time is running out. The days of pleading to





the consciences of those in positions of power are over. We have learned from history and from experience that this rotten order cannot be reformed.

So let us go to Quebec City on April 20th to shut down the FTAA-- but let's do so with a larger goal to shut down capitalism and the state. Let us fight every day, in our workplaces, schools, communities, and autonomous cells, by daylight and by the darkness of night, for a world in which human beings, collectively and individually, may have the freedom and autonomy to make their own decisions regarding the issues directly affecting their lives. Settling for anything less is a compromise to our liberty and our humanity.

for more info on the FTAA visit [www.infoshop.org/octo/FTAA](http://www.infoshop.org/octo/FTAA)



## Assault on the Border by sascha k

The next WTO ministerial will meet within the safe borders of Qatar. This is no surprise; did anyone really believe all this talk of dialogue? During the Seattle meeting, an official from China commented that if the meetings were held in his country there wouldn't be such problems as we saw in the streets. And so it is. Some British biotech firms are shifting their genetic-crop testing precisely to China; no elves of the night there yet. Quebec's new wall is being built to protect the FTAA meetings. So what is to be done? More city based Global Days of Action anyway? How about an assault on the border?

There has been a lot of talk about globalization as the disappearance of the nation-state or the border, but the truth is that exclusion is the other face of capitalist globalization. Borders are getting more flexible for the flow of capital and commodities and stricter for people. Those who cross borders illegally are facing harsher treatment. This is necessary for the continued accumulation of capital. Labor is trapped and separated while capital can easily pick up and move to where labor is the cheapest. Maintaining differences in wage rates is essential to an always-globalizing capital; that is why capitalism can never do without the state and its borders. Thus nationalism isn't an alternative to globalization, as a minority within the anti-globalization movement would have it.



## A LETTER TO THE CASCO BAY WEEKLY

The following is a letter, written by our friend Rob, to the Casco Bay Weekly: Portland's free "liberal" newspaper. It was written in regards to an article about Portland art galleries. We decided to reprint it in its unedited form because it humorously yet poignantly addresses many of the serious problems inherent in modern capitalism.

This letter starts off as a loose barrage of shots vaguely lobbed toward the Art "scene" in Portland ("Who Needs Art Galleries" CBW 15 Feb 2001) but ends up as a silent prayer for a direct hit on what truly is the Heart of Darkness: the economic power of the American suburbs.

There are basically 2 types of people in our culture: Artists and Tourists. That is; you are either on stage or in the audience. The former are true individuals- right brained- "process" oriented, rebels, risk takers, driven, emotional and creative. Meanwhile the Yang of this entity is a balance of the Yin artist: conservative, linear, organized, rigid and "product" oriented. And here is the evil result: with some extra coin, they think that they can buy anything!! A few humans in the CBW article mentioned that we live in a "capitalist society".... it is true (and unfortunate). Now couple this economic system with our tasteless craving for Products, and the result is a constant drugswirl of mass-produced distraction and entertainment, imbedded advertisements and vague promises of some sort of post-modern "Redemption Through Spending!!" and being so spiritually bankrupt this External Quest for Salvation is all about APPEARANCE! For instance: Why feel sad about starving 3rd worlders or the evils of the IMF, World Bank, or WTO? Get a credit card with a cool picture on it!! Belize is a Cool Country- giving the natives 2 dollars for a wonderful rug when you jet there for the holidays makes you feel like you're really making a difference!! I spend lots of money at an Art school that is like sooo cool AND I can really lord it over my friends when I go back home!! This school, by the way, provides (FREE) a



All the wealth that exists in modern society has been created by the interaction of working people's labor power and the natural world. We are separated from the products of our activity by a global market system that is as antagonistic to real life as the lethal technologies and environmental pollutants it produces. Our anti-capitalist actions have tried to make a connection between contemporary struggles of the working class under capitalism and the revolutionary social organization of the future, where all wealth will be shared freely, a world without buying and selling of any kind. We've aimed at overcoming divisions of exploited people into wage workers and non wage-earning, the badly paid and the slightly less badly paid, unionized and non-unionized.

We've tried to make it clear that the degree to which market relations dominate daily life is the degree to which life is oppressive and degrading. When we resist the market economy we live better.

Today the capitalist system works to get everyone, no matter how impoverished and fucked over, to internalize the mindset of the entrepreneur and the cop. But contemporary capitalist strategies for increased repression and social control can be subverted by a mass refusal to cooperate on the part of wage workers and the poor. Employees of mass transit systems are in a crucial position in this regard; their potential power is greater than that of other wage workers. No matter how sophisticated the technology, the human element can sabotage and subvert the machine.

To play by the system's rules is a guarantee that we will lose. Notions like fair play, appeals to justice and democratic rights, leaving it up to the union apparatus and assuming that the law is there to help are false notions, ideological obstacles to the emergence of class consciousness and class action. "Cheating" on subway fares and "stealing" from the system that exploits us and degrades the world is an affirmative act.

Perhaps most important of all, we've used what Corporate America and its media apparatus present as a small, mundane inconvenience as an opportunity to broadcast an anti-capitalist perspective to many tens of thousands of working class and poor people who otherwise wouldn't hear it.

Revolutionaries "disdain to conceal their aims." We've tried to keep our language plain and clear. And we haven't soft-peddled our message. We've been completely upfront about our hatred of wage slavery and the market economy, our hatred for bosses and managers, the unions and the cops, the government and the law. Small, everyday acts of resistance can contribute to the rise of tomorrow's mass anti-market movement.

And in South Africa: "Riding public trains for free and refusing to pay rent...were once seen as legitimate protests [against] apartheid."

"Now the 'culture of non-payment' has become ingrained among the impoverished black majority, despite attempts to erase it by the black-led government that took over in historic all-race elections in 1994."

USA Today, August 1, 1996

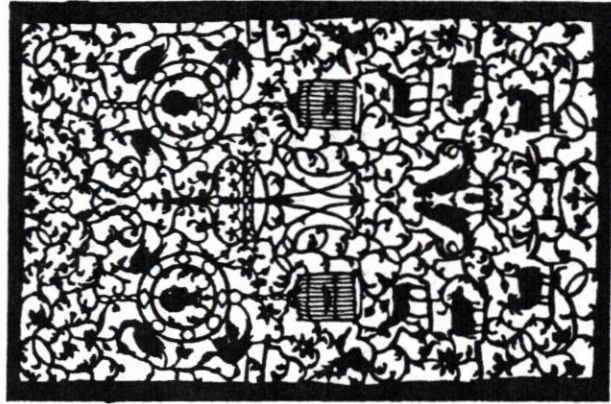
for more info on Love & Treason visit [www.webcom.com/maxang](http://www.webcom.com/maxang)



The border is one of capitalism's weak points, both physically and rhetorically. All the talk of globalization and one world fades under the harsh lights of the border patrol and the detention centers. Every week we hear more horror stories of human transport, of escape and capture: escape from low wages and destroyed lives and capture within new regimes of precariousness and powerlessness. And the immigrants keep coming. And the walls must be built higher, the penalties harsher.

Instead of another Global Day of Action in the cities, instead of activist tourism to Qatar, lets target the border, the detention center, the gated community, the sweatshop (the sweatshop is the child of the border after all). We need to fight the regime that identifies some as illegal and others as legal. This division enforces a precariousness upon us all, a precariousness that disciplines each of us and opens us to greater exploitation. A continued focus on the WTO and financial capitals builds the impression that we are only against a certain type of capitalism. It also opens the movement to cooptation by nationalists and the far right. A focus on borders will expose the wrongheaded arguments of the nationalist fair-weather friends within the anti-globalization movement, and it will show that the globalization we desire can only be accomplished through the destruction of the nation-state and capitalism. Immigration struggles are found everywhere; for this one we don't need to follow the bureaucrats on their holiday in the sun. The struggle against borders and detention centers is an ongoing struggle of the excluded, the exploited, to determine our own fate. We are all illegal until no one is illegal. Exclusion kills us all.

The targets are everywhere; you choose the tactics. Such a struggle is not a one-day event.







## THE NAME OF THE ASSASSINS

From the time they first opened, a long series of revolts has characterized life at the temporary holding centers for undocumented immigrants. Foreigners awaiting expulsion are enclosed in these structures in inhuman living conditions. It is difficult to speak of these centers without taking the risk of falling into the pitiful chatter that is so much in vogue among the aid organizations—more or less governmental, it matters little—that are so expert in the utilization of blood, particularly after so many long lists of the dead killed during these revolts. We are not interested in inviting you to the commotion or the collective petitions for the closure of these jails. The death of these foreigners stands along side the murder of millions of others among the exploited, men and women who are killed by wars, by work, by the destruction of territory, by prison, or more quickly by the bullet from a cop's gun. We no longer believe anyone who tells us that it's a question of incidents far away or of bloody abuse: it is business as usual, all the victims of this global slaughterhouse can be laid to the account of capital and the state. As opposed to boorish pietism, to christian apertifs composed of tears, to those who would want the immigrants out of the "gulag" as long as they remain peaceful but in jail if guilty, to those who would want a world more or less like this one but a bit more "humane", to those who dream of a less bloody capitalism or to those who exploit these episodes in order to enlarge their revolutionary clique—in short, as opposed to anyone who preaches solidarity in oppression, we prefer to propose complicity in revolt. No struggle can be separated from any other, because each manifestation of power is deeply connected to all the others. It is certainly important to close the detention centers, but to demand it from the states merely means to push them to find more efficient and less visible forms of control and repression. Besides understanding these centers as mere physical structures means to hide all those arteries that permit their existence: from the Red Cross that co-manages them to the firms that build them to the contractors for food supplies, all these are the temporary detention centers; all these are the murderers as well.



\*At the time of these events, ATU, Local 1555 represented around 660 train operators, station agents, foreworkers, clerks, communications specialists and power support people. SEIU, Local 790 represented approximately 1,500 maintenance and clerical workers.

### To The Richmond Station

Our Bart Crimes leaflet mimicked the name and appearance of a moronic newsletter titled BART Times that management distributed from plastic slots on fare gates in stations. We began by leafleting the last two of a series of public meetings held by BART bureaucrats in San Francisco's Chinatown and at BART headquarters near Lake Merritt in Oakland. The meeting in Chinatown was a joke; attended by three bureaucrats and two riders. At BART headquarters about 60 irate BART riders and a half dozen BART functionaries showed up. It was entertaining to see the BART bureaucrats, seated in front of their audience, looking over the leaflet and furtively whispering to each other.

After that we found a source of unlimited free photocopying and leafleted riders during the afternoon commute period at stations in San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland and Richmond. We did this two or three days a week for three weeks prior to the April Fools' Day beginning of the fare hike. We also went on empty trains before the morning commute period, from 5:45 a.m. to 7:00 a.m., moving from car to car leaving leaflets on the seats.

One morning while leafleting empty train cars we ran into a BART janitor, holding a large transparent garbage bag filled with our leaflets. This unpleasant sight prompted us to leaflet trains during the main period of the morning commute, moving from car to car giving leaflets directly to passengers. Our unexpected activity on the trains seemed to interrupt the stupefaction of the morning commute. Between surfing the trains at dawn and leafleting afternoon commuters exiting stations, by Friday, March 31, we had distributed around 20,000 leaflets. This was our first experience in industrial-strength leafleting. Friendly BART employees faxed the leaflets around the BART system to other BART workers.

In the final week of March we photocopied a wallposter-sized version of the leaflet and wallpaper-pasted these up around a number of stations. A friend helped draft a press release. This was faxed to a number of the local bourgeois news media outlets, and resulted in front page coverage in the Oakland Tribune on Friday, March 31, the day before the fare hike went into effect.

We distributed our leaflet to BART station agents. And we distributed various forms of pro-fare evasion literature around the BART system. The BART fare hike has been implemented, but the fight continues.



Mayor Jordan's office, and we sang praises to his generosity and concern for the difficulties faced by MUNI riders on the first day of the elimination of transfers. People quickly took the transfers.

A bus driver pulled alongside of us as we covered a bus stop, jumped out of the bus and yelled, "I'll give em to riders! Give me some!" The fake transfers disappeared fast. We did a MUNI stop on Kearny near Market, then quickly moved on, and looking back from a block away we saw the sidewalk completely blocked by people, mobbing the bus stop for transfers.

At around 6 p.m., we were down to our last leaflet, so we tore off three transfers for our own ride back to the Mission District. All around the downtown area, bus stops were still covered by leaflets stripped of fake transfers, and people were reading the letter from Jordan. We went to the MUNI underground at Montgomery and tried them on the man in the booth. He was a supervisor. He refused to take them. We hiked up Market to Powell Street. Again, we found supervisors staffing the booth instead of the usual rank-and-file MUNI workers. The supervisor in the booth was pissed off. He said: "No way! You guys know you didn't pay for those things! Those are some kind of practical joke!"

The mayor's office had to issue a statement at 5 p.m. that day denying responsibility for the letter and the fake transfers.

This prank concluded our fall '93 MUNI campaign.

The elimination of transfers proved to be so unworkable that transfers were reinstated after six months, and as of this date, late 2000, there has still been no fare increase on MUNI.

To the best of our knowledge there was no mass self-reduction movement in response to the abolition of transfers. We heard many stories of drivers letting riders board for free, but this happens a lot of the time, anyway. We didn't think that a self-reduction movement would come into existence in response to our actions. We hope actions like these will contribute to an awareness among exploited and dispossessed people that our needs and the demands of the capitalist economy, (the market system, wage slavery, the world of money, buying and selling, the bosses and parasites who profit from it) are mutually and violently exclusive. Mass, collective action must be taken on this basis.

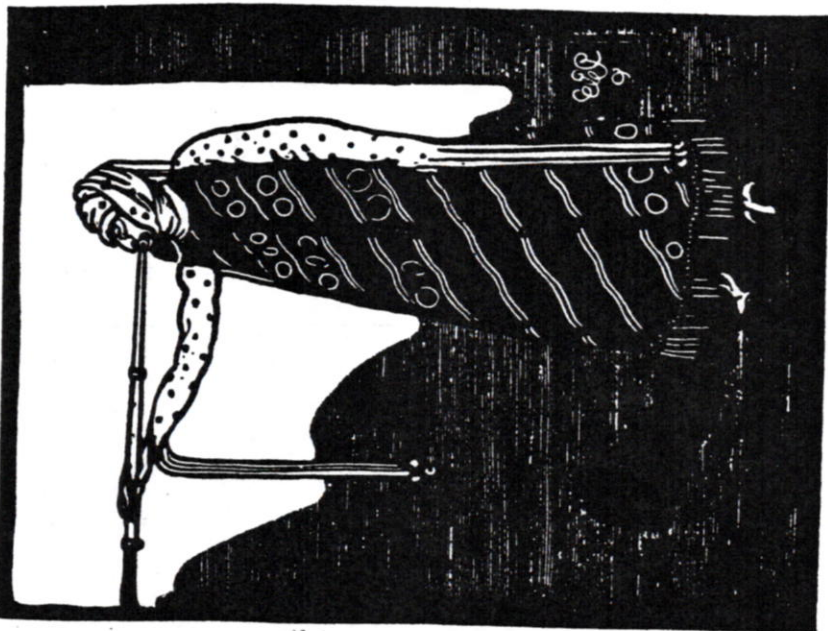
## "Our Society is Insane..."

One evening in 1994, one of us boarded a Bay Area Rapid Transit train in San Francisco and saw a new type of anti-fare evasion poster, unlike others he'd seen before. This poster trumpeted the message "FARE IS FAIR" in large grimly totalitarian block letters, above a more polite and lengthy request to "Play Fair--Pay Your Fare."

Over the course of the next few days we saw these posters and other posters with variations on the same stupid theme on subway cars throughout the BART system. Using their contrasting good cop/bad cop character fonts as our inspiration, we designed a more clearly worded version of the message in the anti-fare evasion poster.

Our sticker aped the contrasting fonts of the anti-fare evasion poster, and borrowed its slogan from an advertising campaign of the Argentine military dictatorships' Dirty War of the 1970s. On the bottom of the anti-fare evasion poster, a message exhorting riders to report fare evaders to the nearest station agent had been taped over to correct an earlier message asking riders to call BART police directly, giving the BART pigs' phone number. We included their phone number on our stickers.

We had a print shop make about 1,300 stickers. Friends would slap up a few stickers going to and from work on BART.



## AGAINST CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Cultural relativism is the notion that people from one culture should not criticize aspects of any culture other than their own. This view springs from post-modernism—the prevailing ideology of the contemporary industrialized world, which uses various "relativisms" in an attempt to negate the possibility of developing any opinions based on a coherent set of ethics or constructive criticism. Proponents of the "cultural relativist" rationale contend that "objective" critique of any aspect of a foreign culture is impossible due to a "cultural bias" held by the individual attempting to draw the critique. Interestingly, this view is often embraced by both liberals (as well as many radicals and assorted 'leftists') and conservatives alike.

Liberals tend to embrace cultural relativism because they idealize non-European cultures and possess a patronizing view of downtrodden and dispossessed peoples. These individuals contend that since most people living in the US (particularly those who happen to be white) are part of the most violent and



oppressive culture on Earth, we have no right to criticize the imperfections of smaller, marginalized cultures. Such an uncritical reasoning (or perhaps a lack thereof) results in liberals and other leftists allowing various forms of oppression (sexism in many Latin American "cultures" and revolutionary movements, for example) to persist without questioning. While it is undoubtedly true that Western "culture" and civilization is by far the most vile and destructive social construct to have ever defaced the Earth, failure to develop constructive and informed critique of various other cultures only limits our humanity's—and other species too! potential for creating a world free of all oppression.

On a more sinister level, cultural relativism puts liberals and other leftists in the situation of being in the same bed, ideologically, as conservatives, Nazis, and other right-wingers. While liberals and lefties indirectly (and often unintentionally) support oppression through cultural relativism, conservative right-wingers use this rationale to directly justify various forms of atrocity. This is done by labeling critiques of racism and patriarchy in other cultures and time periods as manifestations of contemporary Western "culture," to which we are all "culturally biased." For instance, the conservative will claim that we in the 21st century are in no position to critique the actions of American slave-owners prior to the Civil War because slavery was merely an aspect of Southern "culture" at the time. The same twisted reasoning is used to justify female genital mutilation in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, female foot-binding in rural China, and queer-bashing just about everywhere. Taken to its logical extreme, with cultural relativism, all forms of oppression and institutionalized violence—war, ethnic cleansing, slavery, poverty, etc.—may be excused as mere manifestations of "culture."

Cultural relativism also tends to be applied selectively—by



**Wouldn't it be terrible to take a few days off?**  
Sick of a dull, boring job?  
Tired of being pitted against people just like you to make parasitic, asshole bosses rich?

**"Do yourself a favor. In the event of a BART strike, call in sick the first day of the strike and everyday after as long as the strike lasts. Avoid traffic hassles."**

**You'll be glad you did it.**

Before going out at night we'd scam 100 to 150 photocopies of our posters from a copy store that has delightfully lax security. We went out two or three nights a week for six to eight weeks. We covered streetlight poles, ground level billboards and other spots near bus stops along busy streets in central working class neighborhoods: in the Mission District, the Western Addition and Fillmore, the Tenderloin, areas around BART stations, around City College and SF State University. To a more limited degree we also covered the foot of Market Street in the Financial District. The day after posting one of us would usually check to see if the posters were still up, or if they had been trashed by law-abiding shitheads. Except for some reactionary working class alcoholics at McCarthy's bar on Mission Street no one messed with the posters. After foggy nights the posters would still be damp at dawn. But once they had dried they hung as if welded into place. After several months the posters attained a high degree of visibility along key bus routes in the city, which was gratifying, since this part of our efforts in particular had been butt-ass hard work.

#### **Pay No Attention to that Man behind the Curtain...**

After the Public Utilities Commission and the Board of Supervisors approved the elimination of transfers, the mayors' office pushed back the date for the elimination of transfers several times, finally deciding that October 1 would be D-day for their attack on MUNI riders.

At the public meeting at Mission High that March, one of us had picked up a copy of a letter from the mayor which thanked attendees for coming, piously reminded citizens that we must all make sacrifices, etc. Using this as a style model, we drafted a fake letter from San Francisco Mayor Jordan.

Our version of Jordan's letter graciously included official-looking fake MUNI transfers, and for that extra added touch of realism we stamped a meaningless sequence of numbers at the bottom of each transfer, and cut the spaces between the transfers to make them easy to tear off. We photocopied about 600 of our letter from the mayor, and bought a couple of tape guns at an office supply store.

We wanted to spread as much confusion as possible in the Financial District, so beginning at around 3 on the afternoon of Oct. 1, we started at the foot of Market Street (the main street in that part of town).

We worked our way up the street, tape-gunning multiple leaflets next to one another on "burn-proof" MUNI bus stops, the leaflets forming a belt around the insides and outsides of the glass walls of the stops.

Since the elimination of transfers was the big news that day we attracted a lot of attention. To questions from curious passersby, we replied that we were sent by



Jordan appeared on the platform with other city government bureaucrats and entrepreneurs, their freedom of speech and assembly guaranteed by nine or ten armed policemen in the lobby and at the entrances of the auditorium. Jordan's press secretary, Noah Griffin, walked around the audience with a microphone, like on Oprah, offering members of the audience a chance to express their opinions, while the real decisions were, of course, being made off stage.

When you pay the fare on MUNI you can get a transfer, torn by the driver to indicate that it's good for two hours, or two more boardings, whichever comes first. For many years, street people had sold "Late-Nights" for 25 or 50 cents. These are uniform transfers that can be used for an entire day. Books of intact transfers were ripped off from idled, unattended busses, and street people in turn hawked them to riders waiting for the bus at the plazas of BART stations, like 16th and Mission, and 24th and Mission.

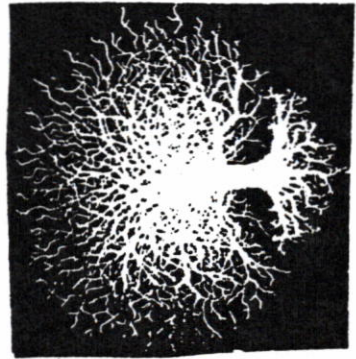
Towards the end of the evening, a number of speakers from the audience denounced the hardships that would result from a 25 cent (and 25%) fare increase. They were concerned for the fate of the city government's budget, and demanded more action by the SFPD against sales of stolen bus transfers. Deploing the prospect of a 25% fare increase, these mathematically challenged suppliants demanded an alternative -- that transfers be eliminated altogether. This would result in a 100% fare increase each time a rider boarded MUNI. Many MUNI lines were designed with the intent that riders would transfer from line to line. Getting rid of transfers would mean riders who have to transfer two and three times traveling between downtown and outlying working class neighborhoods like Bay View or Excelsior would face a whopping 400% to 600% MUNI fare increase.

After three more public meetings, the mayor's office announced that the representatives of the people had been swayed by the will of the masses. Instead of jacking up the fare by a quarter, the mayor's office decided to put a measure before the Board of Supervisors proposing the elimination of transfers.

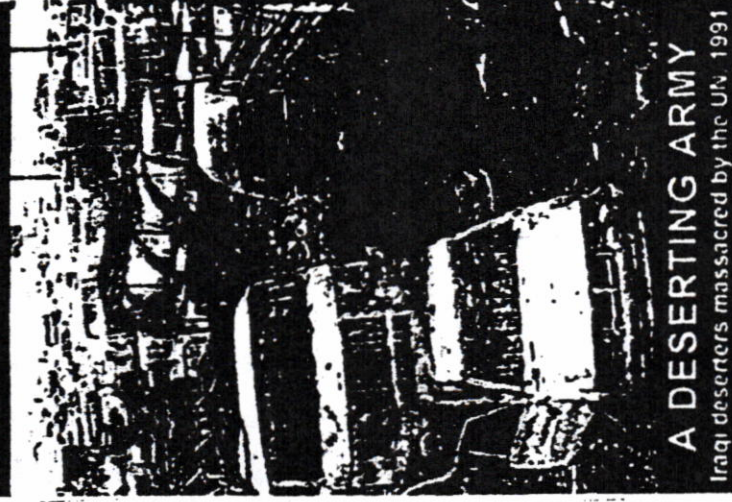
### Everywhere a Small Party

At this point we drafted and began putting up copies of an 11" x 17" wall poster, Refuse To Pay, aimed at MUNI riders, encouraging mass collective fare shirking.

On one or two occasions we had enough people to form two separate wall-postering squads. More often than not we only had enough people to form one postering group. Three or four of us would get together after sundown at a punk rock record store in San Francisco's Mission District. We'd mix a one pound bag of wallpaper paste into a one gallon bucket of lukewarm water, then go out postering, slapping wallpaper paste on inviting surfaces like traffic signal boxes with a large paint brush. The person carrying the bucket did the brush work, (and ended up wearing a lot of wallpaper paste); the person carrying the posters would pass a poster to the third member of the group, who'd slap the poster into place.



### THE ARMY THEY MOST FEAR



### A DESERTING ARMY

Iraqi deserters massacred by the UN, 1991

both leftists and right-wingers—depending upon their given political agenda. The conservative, for example, will use cultural relativism to justify slavery in the early US, but probably cares little for the various cultures being destroyed by the current capitalist policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The liberal, on the other hand, would probably choose to uncritically glorify the cultures being destroyed by the IMF while attempting to ignore or deny the use of their own cultural relativism to justify slavery. The rational person, however, would oppose slavery simply on the grounds that it is a form of institutionalized domination and violence. The rational individual would oppose the IMF and capitalism on the same basis—not merely due to some idealized fascination with people in the third world.

The cultural relativist (as well as most people in our contemporary society) also tends to lack a coherent understanding of exactly what is implied by the term "culture." Most would define culture as the set of customs, beliefs, arts, and values shared by a particular society. In today's world of capitalist globalization and economic imperialism, however, examples of unique cultures barely exist. Indeed, many of the



traditions and values clung to by people in the global south in the name of "cultural preservation" are in fact ideals that were imbued (often violently) into their past generations by European colonizers and Christian missionaries. With the death of culture has also come the annihilation of real community. As capitalism and industrial agricultural methods proceed to dominate the globe, the last remaining cultures and communities, defined by their strong social bonds and sustainable self-sufficiency, struggle to maintain their existence in remote jungle and desert regions (and still are not completely free from the ever invasive and expanding industrial civilization).

The cultural relativist contends that we in the "developed" world must not let our "cultural bias" interfere with an "objective" understanding of history and foreign cultures. Those who adhere to the devious reasoning of cultural relativism, however, usually analyze history and culture from the perspective of those who hold control of power and enforce the "cultural" standards of the society in question. Hence, claims of objectivity are proven false. The selective application of cultural relativism further weakens the case for its legitimacy, as the political agenda of the applicant tends to play a more important role than a supposed desire for "fairness" or "objectivity." Additionally, as we have shown, the existence of authentic cultures on our planet today is scarce at best. Thus the relevance of arguments for cultural relativism is further eroded.

Few cultures today, if any, exist in which there is no form of inequality or domination. Whether such a culture has ever existed we may never know for sure. The prospect of such cultures existing in the future, however, remains a possibility despite the bleak appearance of our present global crisis. Such a possibility remains, however, only as long as our actions of steadfast resistance and revolt are backed by theory and critique that is not afraid of sometimes appearing "politically incorrect." We in the global north must strive to truly understand people of other backgrounds so that our support and critique may be based on informed knowledge and experience. Furthermore, we must help foster continued interaction between people of diverse cultures and geographic locations so as to improve the potential for mutual aid and mutual liberation. If dedicated and persistent, we may one day see the decaying matter of a dead industrial monoculture become fertilizer for the growth of thousands of diverse and flourishing communities.

Our first step was to write and distribute a leaflet to MUNI drivers and station agents. Public transit workers are in the most crucial position for making a self-reduction effort possible. Also, we wanted to sabotage efforts by management to direct MUNI riders' anger at MUNI workers, and help refocus that anger at the proper target, the commodity economy and its administrators. We pointed out the connection between the impending attack on working class people who ride MUNI, and inevitable future attacks on the wage levels and benefits of MUNI workers.

## FARE EVASION



## JUST DO IT

Our leaflet mimicked the layout and font of the San Francisco Examiner, one of SF's two daily bourgeois lie-sheets. The Examiner had run a series of articles against city employees that singled out MUNI workers in particular as overpaid, shiftless burns. We had to get copies of our stuff to roughly 2,000 drivers and train operators, and a much smaller number of station agents in MUNI underground stations. So we began by boarding a MUNI streetcar, briefly talking with the driver and giving her or him a leaflet, then leaving the train car at the next stop. We went in this manner from one car to another, up and down the main inbound and outbound underground MUNI line, from Church Street to Embarcadero. After several days of this we were running into a number of the same train operators that we had leafleted earlier, and moved on to leafletting bus drivers.

Conveniently for our leaflet distribution efforts, a large number of MUNI bus lines begin and end at the intersection of Mission and Stewart Streets, and also in front of the Transbay Terminal building a few blocks away. We spent a few hours during several afternoon rush hours giving leaflets to drivers at these locations. The leaflet was generally received with sympathy from drivers, who frequently asked for extra copies to give to other MUNI employees. Over the next few weeks we were told by drivers that the leaflets were being reproduced on MUNI photocopy machines and left in workers' mailboxes at MUNI yards.

By the middle of the summer we'd received enough feedback from MUNI drivers to know we'd reached a saturation point among employees of the transit system.

### The Mass Psychology of Democracy

Soon after Jordan announced plans for a fare hike, a series of public meetings were convened in high school auditoriums in various San Francisco neighborhoods. These meetings were excellent examples of how democratic regimes allow the working class to petition their exploiters to govern them more effectively. The meeting one of us attended at the Mission High auditorium on March 30, '93 enabled the stupidest members of the audience to suggest measures more draconian than those initially proposed by the mayor.



## Black Bart Rides Again

Late in 1994, it looked like a strike by BART workers might take place. We drafted a leaflet, BART ATTACK #2, the first version having been distributed to BART workers under similar circumstances in the summer of '91.

We distributed the latest version to train operators in our usual manner. We had two groups of people at each end of the platform of the MacArthur BART Station in Oakland. All the trains in the system go through this station, and in a few hours we were able to get leaflets to all the train operators working one afternoon commute period. The leaflet went through a series of revisions as we got more information and as events unfolded. We also went from station to station giving leaflets to station agents. The leaflet was well received by train operators and somewhat less well received by station agents.

We knew from our previous efforts that MUNI workers in SF were hopping mad at management, so we rode MUNI busses, talking to drivers to get information for a revised version of the leaflet. We suggested that they could use a BART strike as an opportunity to stage a wildcat walkout around their own demands and grievances and in support of BART strikers. In the course of our conversations, and in talking to people we know who work for BART, we found out that MUNI management, with the cooperation of the union representing MUNI drivers, was planning to run "Special BART Express" busses on Market and Mission Streets. In other words, MUNI drivers who were members of TWU 250A would scab on BART employees, many of them members of a different local of the same union, and help break their strike. So we distributed a revised leaflet to MUNI bus and streetcar operators and made an issue of the plans for scabbing.

As always, we used this opportunity to attack the unions as capitalist business organizations. The function of the unions is to keep the working class in line. Wage workers need to form their own autonomous organizations outside of and totally hostile to capital's labor brokerage outfits.

A sympathetic BART employee told us that word had gotten back to BART workers that the union representing MUNI drivers had been told by drivers that they would refuse to go along with plans to scab on a BART strike. He credited our actions with having brought it about. We were happy to hear that at least one aspect of our efforts had shown results.

Several of us rode BART trains before the morning commute hour a few days in advance of the possible strike and taped our (8.5" x 11") BART FLU flyer over ads on the trains. We wanted to encourage a widening of a BART strike into a wildcat walkout by thousands of atomized wage-slaves.

Before the strike the unions representing BART workers, SEIU, Local 790 and Amalgamated Transit Workers Union, Local 1555\* issued a "BART rider bulletin", offering commuter tips on how to undercut the effectiveness of a walkout by BART employees. This was a clear demonstration of the unions' loyalty to whatever the bosses wanted and their antagonism to the interests of union members. Ultimately the unions' devious and chickenshit maneuvers resulted in acceptance of a lousy give-back contract by BART workers. At that time as well, a number of combative workers were forced out of low-level positions in the union apparatus. Many BART workers were pissed off at the give-back contract. Unfortunately no wildcat actions took place.

A few months after BART management's successful attack on BART employees it became evident that a major BART fare increase was in the works. We used information about the raw deal that management and their union waterboys had run on BART employees in our Bart Crimes leaflet.



## Affinity Groups and Nonhierarchy: A Brief History

To resist against the present horror of reality breathes a sign of much needed hope. As with all governments (feudalist, capitalist, state capitalist) the current techno-capitalist behemoth is subject to critique and subsequent attack by those seeking life without government, authority, and capitalism. Examples abound of resistant individuals and others banding together to fight in hopes of creating something new and unchoreographed.

The resilient anti-WTO fighters organizing together declaring their defiance (sometimes failing, however, to connect their anti-corporate sentiment to resistance against the totality of capital), the Brazilian MST squatting land in defiance of an authoritarian parasitic government, in addition to explicitly anti-authoritarian action through many parts of Europe are a few of the many rebellious currents impelling others to join in creating a new life.

The organizational form worldwide has borrowed from Anarchist principles rather than Leninist/Stalinist/Maoist/Trotskyist models for revolution (at least in the above mentioned examples). Fortunately such "organizations" based upon authoritarianism have become fewer in number and membership has dwindled significantly. Individuals are coming to recognize intuitively, if not in theory or historical praxis, the authoritarian base of "vanguard" parties.



The principles derived from Anarchism include the Affinity Group structure and nonhierarchy. I'm not saying, however, if a group makes use of such derivative principles they necessarily qualify as Anarchists. Quite the contrary, the Direct Action Network acted in an excessively authoritarian manner during the Seattle WTO protests. They tried to sway the whole of the protests with their dogmatic adherence to a code of "nonviolence". In addition, their group refused to support Anarchists jailed during and after the WTO protests.

### Affinity Groups

An Affinity Group is the autonomous association of 5-10 individuals organizing together with the intent of participating in an action. The history of the Affinity Group dates back to the Spanish Revolution\* (if not before)



when the term (Grupo de Afinidad) was "officially adopted by the FAI, accurately denoting the early Spanish Anarchist concept that true revolutionary groups must be kept small in order to foster a sense of deep intimacy between members. An affinity group rarely numbered more than a dozen people. Each member was drawn to others not only by common social principles, but also by common personal proclivities or 'affinities.' The group, in effect, was an extended family- with the added feature that the Spanish Anarchists placed an immensely high premium on personal initiative and independence of spirit. Owing to this intimacy, a faista affinity group was not easily penetrated by agents." (Murray Bookchin; *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868-1936* pgs 196-197)

The Affinity Group of today shares such principles, though many fail to recognize the importance of such method of organization. Fortunately, however, it appears as if information relating to the Affinity Group has become more available and therefore better applicable.

## Nonhierarchy



Non hierarchy is the ceasing of relational power dynamics within the contest of personal/social transformation. The origins of hierarchy lie within the very bedrock of the breakdown of early village societies. With the violent transition from a tribal village (which of course was met with violent resistance) to a mass urban metropolis came the domination of hierarchical kingdoms. Thus the control of the necessities of life were wrested from popular control into elitist control, while tribal/kin relations were supplanted by class relations. This, in turn, created hierarchical social relations of exploited/exploiter. Consequently, the whole of our psyche is dominated by the logic of passive subjects and delegational rulers. In our struggle to actively resist the global beast, the necessity of applying a nonhierarchical relation to our work is of utmost importance. Obviously, so long as the dominant society exists we will inevitably be tainted with hierarchical relations. It's up to us, however, to strive to create anti-authoritarian projects which are as free of the reigns of hierarchy as possible within the current context.

So carry on resisting against the forces which seek to restrain our body, minds, and spirits. As the rebellious nature of late symbolizes, capital has yet to completely constrain those brave warriors daring to rise against the illegitimacy of all authority, government, mass technics, and capital exchange.

\*For a critical assessment of the Spanish Revolution of 1936 and its betrayal on the part of the CNT to the forces of democracy and fascism, check out "When Insurrections Die" by Gilles Dauve available from Antagonism Press- also a different version is available under the name "Fascism/Anti Fascism" available from AK Press.

One morning after rush hour, and well before the afternoon rush, a small number of people took a large number of stickers and spent several hours altering a large number of posters.

Later that same day an irate BART rider called the phone number on the sticker, 1-(510) 464-7000:

(Bart cop answering phone): "Bart police."

Irate rider: "What's this about you jacking up the fares by 50 percent!?"

Bart cop: "What are you talking about?"

Irate rider: "You got stickers up all over the trains sayin' you're gonna jack up fares by 50 percent!"

Bart cop (now pissed off): "This is the Bart police emergency line, do you have an emergency?!"

Irate rider: "Yeah! You're jacking up the fares by 50 percent, I'd say that constitutes an emergency!"

If they were caught before the adhesive dried, the stickers could be peeled off. But after 30 minutes or so the stickers clung fast, and couldn't be pulled off without trashing the anti-fare evasion posters.

After about two months we had added our stickers to almost every one of the anti-fare evasion posters. At that point BART management apparently gave up trying to replace them.

BART management also had anti-fare evasion stickers placed on top of the gates into and out of the paying areas of the system. These stickers were about the same size and had a similar appearance to our stickers, and had served as something of a style model for us. We put some stickers over these, though our efforts at this were more haphazard than what we did to the posters on the train cars. When our stickers were removed they tended to remove the underlying anti-fare evasion stickers, too.

No BART fare increase was known to be in the works when we made our stickers. To highlight the ridiculous qualities of BART management's anti-fare evasion propaganda we wildly overestimated the likely size of a BART fare increase, pulling the 50% figure out of a hat. But at the beginning of 1995 BART management decided to go for a 45% fare hike over the course of the next three years. Did they get the idea from us, or what? The absurdities of contemporary capitalist austerity and repression are so pronounced that they tend to escape our ability to lampoon them.





# Anti-Capitalist Actions Around Mass Transit in San Francisco, 1993 to 1995:

by Kevin Keating

## ACTIONS TO ENCOURAGE A "CULTURE OF NON-PAYMENT..."

In the spring of 1993, San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan launched an attack on the living standards of the city's working class by demanding a fare increase of 25 cents per ride on MUNI. MUNI is San Francisco's main public transit system, made up of motor coaches, trolleys, metro trains, and the world-famous cable cars, with approximately 686,000 passenger boardings every weekday. In response to Jordan's attack, a small group of anti-capitalist radicals engaged in a seven-month campaign against the fare hike.

Class war occurs wherever the exploited and dispossessed confront market relations and the state, and not only in our struggles as wage workers in workplaces. Our potential power is greatest wherever we come together in large numbers; the majority of mass transit users are wage workers and poor people. Urban bus and subway systems probably bring together more members of the modern slave class than any other social space.

Our efforts were inspired by what we'd heard and read about similar struggles in other countries, particularly movements for "self-reduction" of prices in Italy in the mid to late 1970's:

"With an inflation rate of over 25%, widespread unemployment, and increasing repression, Italy's current economic crisis shows how far capital is willing to push its attack against the living conditions of the working class.

"One of the distinct marks of this crisis -- in Italy as well as in other capitalist countries -- is the extent to which class conflict has widened, involving directly the area of social consumption. The dramatic increase in the cost of living is in fact setting off a wave of struggles dictated by the working class need to protect their wage gains, and to ensure adequate access to essential goods and services such as food, housing, utilities and transportation..."

"The practice of 'self-reduction' -- i.e., the refusal to comply with price increases of essential services -- 'is the answer that has emerged from this terrain of struggle..."

"Self-reduction is not an entirely new phenomenon in Italy...What is new is the way in which this practice has spread to other sectors of essential social consumption, such as public transit, electricity and home heating.

"When viewed in the context of parallel practices -- such as squatting and organized mass appropriation of groceries from supermarkets -- this struggle becomes more than a merely defensive one. It becomes -- as some militants have called it -- a struggle for the re-appropriation of social wealth produced by the working class but unpaid by capital."

from *The Working Class Struggle Against The Crisis: Self-Reduction of Prices In Italy*, by Bruno Ramirez, February 1975.



## SOLIDARITY WITH ANARCHIST PRISONERS IN TURKEY!

For several months, inmates in Turkish prisons have been rebelling against efforts by prison administrators to move prisoners into a more repressive system of incarceration. This new system, the "F" type prison, will keep prisoners isolated in single cells, instead of the previous dormitory-type or block. The F-type prison, also called "cofiyars", is aimed at breaking prisoners ability to act together against the prison system.

1500 prisoners have gone on hunger strike. At least 34 prisoners have been murdered by police attacks inside the prisons.

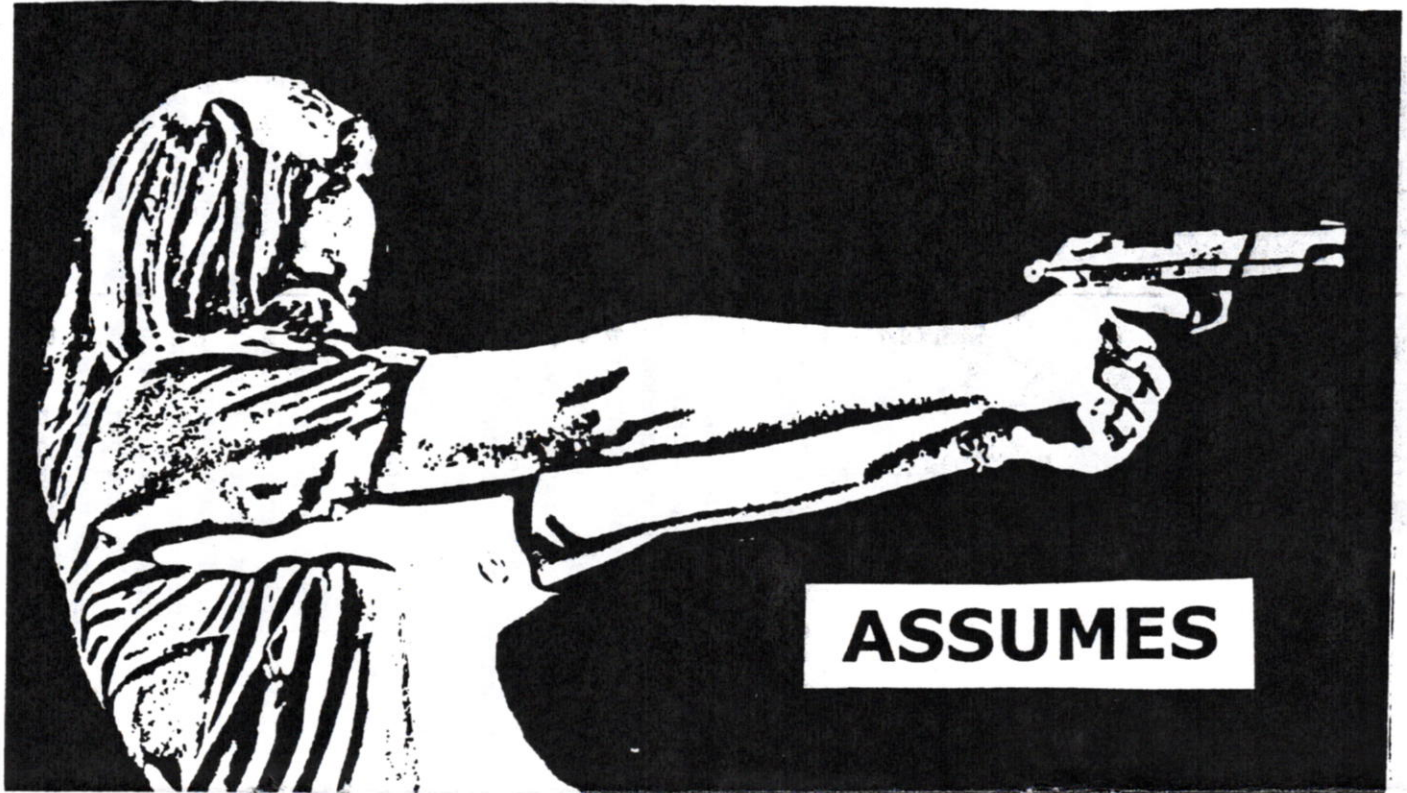
Within this context of repression, anarchist prisoners are menaced by the Turkish State, and by Leninist-Stalinist groups inside the prisons. Stalinist groups have established an "inner prison," like a prison gang, setting themselves up to negotiate with the prison authorities and holding power over other prisoners.

Members of the 5th May Group (anarchist exiles in London) and the The Solidarity Network For Anarchist Prisoners in Turkey (ATDA) are fighting against the effort of the Turkish State to move prisoners into F-type death cells. The state wants to atomize and pacify individuals in prison, depriving them contact with one another and preventing them from being able to rebel against the prisons. We are against all prisons, which are products of capitalism. We take part in the fight against the F-type cells without collaborating with the Leninist left. These leftists treat our comrades the same way that the state does.

Anarchist prisoners in Turkey urgently need our support and solidarity. Some of our comrades are gravely ill. For more information, the address: PO Box 2427, London N8 OHW, England.



# OUR SIMPLICITY



# YOUR STUPIDITY

We use dramatic and sensational imagery to capture your attention. But our text is completely void of actual content or insight. We assume that you are not intelligent enough to think critically or develop your own ideas. Our catchy slogans, bold print, and shocking graphics aim not to encourage your growth as a creative, free-thinking person, but serve to convince you to buy our product, join our organization, or adhere to our pre-packaged ideology. Whether we are a multi-national corporation trying to sell you soft-drinks or an anarchist/socialist/communist/ organization trying to sell you our brand of revolutionary dogma, we appeal not to your intellect, but to your emptiness—your craving to fill the void left in your soul by a deeply alienating world of impersonal mass technology, superficial materialism, and the 40+ hour work week. Our tabloids and advertisements do not offer any meaningful alternative to the misery of modern existence, despite their alluring promises of happiness. Instead, they add to our society's sad fakeness by flooding your field of vision with inane, spectacular images.